Increase in stock of central grain pool

148. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether wheat and rice stocks in the central grain pool are estimated upto 50.8 million tonnes by the end of the current paddy procurement season and in the next wheat procurement season, beginning in April, and the stock would swell upto 60 million tonnes by the June next;

(b) if so, whether 'Food for Work' programme, would be reintroduced considering half of the children and women population is under nourished and suffering malnutrition;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 1.1.2001 were 45.77 million tonnes. Taking into account the trend of offtake under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Welfare Schemes, Open Sale and exports and the estimated procurement during the current Kharif marketing season and the ensuing Rabi marketing season, the estimated stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 1.10.2001 would be 53 million tonnes. Since the procurement of rice (including paddy in terms of rice) during 2001-2002 Kharif marketing season cannot be estimted at this stage, the estimate of stocks by the end of June 2002 cannot be forecast.

(b) to (d) Government of India has taken a number of steps to utilize the surplus stocks in the Central Pool, including release of foodgrains to the State/UTs for 'Food for Work' at BPL rates. With a view to helping the States to generate employment opportunities in the drought affected areas, a quantity of 2,52,500 tonnes of wheat to Rajasthan and a quantity of 96,600 tonnes of rice to Chhattisgarh has

been allotted at BPL rates for employment generation through Food for Work in the drought affected areas. The Government of India has allotted 5 lakh tonnes of foodgrains to Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan on 12.1.2001 free of cost for organizing employment generation programmes in these States.

Black marketing of foodgrains meant for PDS

†149. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to considerable shortcomings in the present Public Distribution System, substantial quantum of foodgrains to be sold under this system is being in black market;

(b) if so, the details of the enquiry report, if any, in this regard;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to stop this malpractice by introducing comprehensive reforms in this system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Public Distribution System (PDS) is an operation of vast magnitude involving large number of agencies under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments. As such offences committed by some functionaries owing to temptations of easy black money cannot be ruled out. Tata Economic Consultancy Services (TECS) was engaged in the year 1997 for a study to assess the extent of diversion of foodgrains, sugar and edible oil under PDS. The diversion is estimated at 36% in case of wheat and 31% in case of rice.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.